



CAMP VALAQUA  
From the Riverbank...

# After the Dust Settles

The dust has settled and the summer of 2009 was another great year! Campers came and experienced new things, were challenged and grew.

As I look back on the summer I feel the satisfaction that comes from hard work done in community. The dedication and countless hours put in by the young staff members is truly something to behold.

Camp continues to be fully “owned” by the young people and youth who work and play here and Valaqua is truly blessed to have such a committed group of people who give of themselves every summer to make

camp happen.

I am reminded of how blessed Valaqua is every spring when I talk to Directors from other camps and see the panic in their eyes as they struggle to fill the last spots on their staff.

Valaqua is not without it’s challenges but finding dedicated young people to provide a great program is not one. The young people who work here do an amazing job and I encourage all of you to thank them and let them know you appreciate the work they do for Mennonite Church Alberta.

## Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Celebrating 50 Years of Camping Ministry

Camp Valaqua celebrates 50 years this summer. This spring, Valaqua celebrated with a party that included a concert and worship service.

On the weekend of June 13-14, over 150 people came together in fellowship to celebrate Camp Valaqua. Stories were told of the early days

and hauling water from the creek to the cook shelter which consisted of a tarp strung in the trees.

From that rustic start we find ourselves at Valaqua today. While we no longer cook under a tarp shelter, Valaqua continues

to be an island of calm in a hectic world.

Campers at Valaqua continue to experience God in Creation, free from the distraction of cell phones, video games and the internet.

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### Special points of interest:

- “Camp is just unique – it’s a community built from strangers”
- Valaqua celebrates 50 years!
- Jr and Senior High Snow Camps are coming! Save the Dates.

## Take Your Place... Plant Peace!

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This summer's theme was about world peace. When I think of world peace I think of beauty pageant speeches and impossible dreams, but every dream must start somewhere and this summer we explored just where the journey begins.

Based on the "Peace is a Choice" curriculum put out by Mennonite Central Committee, Take Your Place... Plant Peace! focuses on the little things that

we can do and the ways we can adjust our thinking to bring peace to the world. Lessons like 'pray for each other', 'listen with care', and 'learn forgiveness' challenged campers and staff to adjust how they think about conflict and one another.

Our Chaplains told us stories of peacemakers around the world, showed us how Jesus lived peace in his life and challenged us to be peacemakers.

## Hike-a-Thon

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**Our 8th Annual Hike-a-Thon took place on June 6th at Black Rock Mountain in the Ghost/Waiprous area.**

**Twenty-eight tenacious hikers braved rough roads and a snowy day to come and hike with us. Good times were had despite the**

**snow and cold! Together, over \$10,000 was raised towards our Staff Residence project.**

## A Big THANK YOU!

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Volunteers continue to be critical to Valaqua's success. A HUGE thank you to everyone who took time to help this summer, whether you helped as a Teen or Adult Kitchen or Maintenance Volunteer, a Chaplain or a Camp Nurse your contribution was much appreciated. Thank You! We hope to see you next summer!

### Chaplains 2009:

Breakaway I—Kari Enns  
Discovery I—Doug Klassen  
Explorer I—Joani Neufeldt

Discovery II—Arlene Fuhr  
Explorer II—Nicole Wiens  
Breakaway II—Kim Thiessen, Abe Janzen and Kari Enns

## The Not-so-off season

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Camp Valaqua continues to be well used during the 10 months when camp is not in session.

Church retreats, Scout groups, family reunions and even wed-

dings keep the site busy every weekend and school groups are beginning to join us midweek for outdoor activities and nature lessons.

If your church or retreat group

would like to utilize Valaqua, please give us a call! We would love to host you!

Due to high demand, please book well in advance

## Valaqua Wish List

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**-Taxidermy animals, especially native species**  
**-6-8 large round or square bales**

**-A snowmobile for trail grooming**  
**-A welder**

# Staff 2009

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**Valaqua continues to be blessed by dedicated and hardworking staff who bring camp to life for the summer months. Mennonite Church Alberta should be very proud of the youth and young adults involved. If you see them in your churches make sure to thank them for their hard work this summer!**

## Leadership Support Staff

**Assistant Director:** Heather Schellenberg  
**CIT Director:** Megan Enns  
**Activities Coordinator/Office Assistant:** Rachel Braul  
**Out-Trip Director:** Jared Bourn  
**Assistant Out-Trip Director:** Kendra Freeland  
**Nature Leader:** Anna Schellenberg  
**Interim Manager:** Nicholas Fast

**Head Cook:** Jaymie Schmidt (July) and Gina Trapp (August)  
**Assistant Cook:** Katrina Fiedler

## Female Counselors

Elizabeth Schowalter (Head Lifeguard/Head Counselor)  
Ellen Duncan  
Blain Pauls  
Karis Klassen  
Jesse Thiessen  
Katie Schmidt

## Female CITs

Alison Goerzen  
Lisa MacDonald  
Kristy Archibald  
Kyla Peters  
Sonya Stoesz  
Kristin Klassen  
Rebecca Remple

## Male CITs

Kevin Stoesz  
Justin Stoesz  
Stephen Retzlaff  
Danny Sung  
Eli Schellenberg  
Morgan Janzen

## Male Counselors

Jeff Wiehler (Head Counselor)  
Brent Retzlaff  
Cameron Retzlaff  
Michael Neufeldt  
Mark Heinrichs  
Niko Schellenberg  
Chris Wilhelm

## Save the Date(s)

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**Jr High Snow Camp January 22-24, 2010**

**Sr High Snow Camp February 19-21, 2010**

## Note from the Assistant Director

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Through my involvement and leadership at camp, I have experienced a deeper sense of who I am. My camper experience at Valaqua, and staff experience at Silverlake in Ontario and Shekinah in Saskatchewan are uniquely different from one another. However, the essentials that ground each of these places tie them closely together. All three of these camps share a holistic commitment that says that who we are, what we believe and what we do, cannot be separated. At each camp, kids and staff witness the importance of a community that fosters and builds healthy relationships. In each camp setting, kids and staff are immersed in a world so different than the TV, internet, ipods and shopping malls world they have come from. At camp we touch the beauty of creation and in doing that, an authentic way to encounter one other and ourselves

emerges.

For me camp has helped give definition to what community can be. Camp brings together kids and staff with vastly different backgrounds and personalities, many of whom have never met each other, and within a week they have been washed with acceptance, affirmation and inclusion together. The power of modeling and leadership in these settings is profound. I think what feeds all of this is a faith vision and commitment. Friendship, acceptance, God's love, the upside down, servant way of Jesus...all find their way into life at camp. Camp is just unique – it's a community built from strangers; it's not a church but faith and worship are alive; it's not a biology classroom but the created world resonates through everything we do.

**“Camp is just unique –  
it's a community built  
from strangers”**



## **CAMP VALAQUA YEAR-ROUND STAFF**

**JON OLFERT  
CAMP DIRECTOR**

**JEFF SCHELLENBERG AND  
INGRID JANSSEN  
CAMP MANAGERS**

### **CAMP COMMITTEE**

**PAUL NEUFELDT  
BYRON THIESSEN  
MIKE BROWN  
BRIAN HILDEBRANDT  
GORD TAVES  
HILARY JANZEN**

**Box 339  
Water Valley AB  
T0M 2E0**

**Phone: 403-637-2510**

**Fax: 403-637-2183**

**Email: valaqua@xplornet.com**

***Discover God in Creation***

**Check out our website!  
[www.campvalaqua.com](http://www.campvalaqua.com)**



## **Mission Statement**

Camp Valaqua is a Christian ministry of the member Churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta.

It extends the ministries and congregational life of these churches by providing facilities and Christian programs in a unique setting close to creation. Camp Valaqua also serves as a ministry outreach to the larger community by inviting others to participate in the use of its facilities and Christian ministry.

Camp Valaqua is dedicated to proclaiming the Good News that God is the Creator, we are God's people, and the earth is placed in our hands as a gift and a trust. We give campers the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to be with others in a Christian community, to learn how to care for God's creation, and to have a lot of fun.

## **Location**

Camp Valaqua operates as a summer camp for children ages 8-16 as well as a year round rental facility. Valaqua is located 1 hour NW of Calgary near Water Valley Alberta, beautifully situated in the Foothills of the Rocky Mountains on the Little Red Deer River. 250 acres of spruce and poplar forest offer extensive hiking and nature study trails. Facilities include a modern lodge with washrooms and showers, 12 rustic cabins, recreation hall, climbing wall, ball diamond and nature centre.

